

Mall foes to seek water unit referendum

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Ketchikan News Reporter

QUILDERLAND - Opponents of the proposed Crossgates Mall say they will seek a referendum now that the Town Board has passed a resolution to consolidate the Westmere and McKownville water districts.

Four town board members voted for the resolution Tuesday night following a stormy public hearing. Virginia Moran, the lone Democrat on the board, abstained.

After the meeting, several Crossgates opponents, including Rhonda Childs, president of Concerned Citizens Against Crossgates, and Donald Reeb, a member of the board of directors of the McKownville Improvement Association, said they would push for a referendum on the consolidation of the two water districts. Petitions with 25 signatures from each water district or 100 from both must be gathered before a vote can be held.

Mall opponents say they want a referendum because they fear consolidation of the districts will allow the state Department of Environmental Conservation to declassify the McKownville Reservoir, permitting pollutants from the mall to be discharged there.

Town board members say they would not allow this to happen. Voting in favor of the resolution to consolidate the two water districts were John Smircich,

John Ryan, Donald Croosey and Town Supervisor Carl Walters.

McKownville Fire Department members, who had submitted petitions seeking the consolidation, have said there is only one water main connecting the two districts. A break in that main, they say, could cause a "fire disaster."

That view was presented at the hearing by McKownville Fire Department member Fred Abele, who also serves on the McKownville Fire District board of directors.

Discussion became heated after John Esler, a member of the McKownville Water District Water Advisory Board and a Crossgates opponent, resigned his post, saying he was not allowed to speak about the consolidation before a vote was taken at a recent advisory board session.

Under questioning by Esler, Dennis Tyson, the town superintendent of water and waste water management, said an additional connection between the water districts already exists on Dillenbeck Drive. That connection could be utilized in a fire emergency. Tyson said.

After Esler's resignation, Albany County Legislator Anne Gaffney said she was dismayed that the public was not aware the water advisory board was meeting.

Another Crossgates opponent, Margaret McKinley, questioned board members about a letter to Town Super-

visor Carl Walters from Robert Sproul, former managing partner of the proposed Crossgates Mall, stating declassification of the McKownville Reservoir to allow more pollutants to be dumped there was necessary before his company could build a mall

on the watershed of the reservoir.

A necessary step before declassification was consolidation of the two water districts, he said, so that the McKownville Reservoir would no longer be the legal source of water for the district.

Saratoga state park site of senior citizen outing

SARATOGA SPRINGS—A picnic for the senior citizens of Saratoga County will be sponsored by the Saratoga Nutrition Service at the Orenda Pavilion on the Saratoga Spa State Park beginning at noon July

25. Registration deadline is Friday. For more information, call the Nutrition Service, Saratoga County Office for the Aging at 365-4484 or 587-0673.